# Georgia Gwinnett College

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) is the **only access institution within the University System of Georgia that primarily offers baccalaureate degrees**. The GGC mission states that the College "provides access to targeted baccalaureate and associate level degrees that meet the economic development needs of the growing and diverse population of the northeast Atlanta metropolitan region." Founded in 2005, Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) operates, and has always operated, in the context of a clear strategic plan derived from its mission. From its inception, access to and success in baccalaureate education have been at the center of the College's efforts. GGC's growth and its success in serving a challenging population are evidence of the College's commitment to providing not only access to post-secondary educational opportunity but also support structures that engender success.

A review of the basic demographic characteristics of the GGC student population shows a preponderance of those who are traditionally underserved and for whom substantial support structures are essential.

**GGC students tend to have relatively low levels of academic preparation**. The mean high school GPA of GGC's Fall 2014 entering freshman cohort was 2.79, among the lowest in the USG State Colleges. Each cohort of first-time entering students at GGC has had a consistent academic profile with a mean high school GPA of between 2.69 and 2.82, with over 30% requiring remediation in at least one core subject (Math, English, Reading). New transfer student cohorts have traditionally entered with a mean transfer GPA between 2.3 and 2.9 and transfer in an average of 40-45 semester hours.

**GGC enrolls a substantial number of first-generation college students**. Results from four consecutive years of the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) indicate that 40-50% of the entering first-time students are from families in which neither parent has a college degree. A more detailed analysis of the most recent entering class shows that 38.1% of entering students have no parent with a college degree. Other self-report data continues to indicate that over 20% of entering GGC students are the first in their families to attend college. These findings suggest a substantial portion of the student population may enroll without having had a model of college attendance as a regular part of their formative educational experience.

**GGC is a majority-minority institution.** GGC enrolls a highly diverse student population and has been majority-minority since 2009. GGC has been recognized by *US News and World* Report as the most diverse college in the South. For Fall 2014, the College's race/ethnicity data show that its student population is 38.7% White, 31.4% Black/Non-Hispanic, 15.6% Hispanic, 9.3% Asian, and 3.8% multiracial. This pattern of racial/ethnic enrollment has been consistent for several years.

**GGC enrolls a high percentage of Pell Grant eligible students**. For the past four years, over 50% of each entering freshman cohort has been eligible for Pell grants, and over two-thirds have received financial aid of one form or another. For the upcoming academic year, preliminary data show that over 60% of GGC students are Pell eligible.

**GGC students are primarily traditional-aged and full-time.** For each of the past four years, 98% of GGC's incoming freshmen have been under 24 and 84% of the student population as a whole is of traditional age (18-24). Further, over 70% of the student population is enrolled full-time, taking 12 or more credit hours per semester. However, **GGC students are more likely to work over 20 hours per week than most traditional-aged, full-time students.** The 2014 NSSE data show that 35% of GGC's first-year students and 47% of prospective graduates work over 20 hours per week in comparison to national results of 12% and 34%, respectively. Similar results were found in the 2013 NSSE data.

These consistent characteristics of GGC's student population, along with the mission's focus on providing both opportunity and support, have shaped the College's specific strategies for promoting completion. GGC's key priorities in support of Georgia's college completion goals are focused on increasing enrollment among typically underserved populations, supporting students through a successful transition to higher education, and providing tools that enable early successes for our students. GGC has focused first on increasing access and success for the traditionally underserved. The specific strategies and activities pursued in GGC's Completion Plan are oriented toward supporting the transition to higher education, early academic success, and the formation of strong relationships with faculty, staff, and other students. These three factors are well documented as strong predictors of persistence and success, particularly in underserved populations. A successful transition to higher education is facilitated by the College's focus on student engagement and student success in the first year, most notably through advising programs, faculty mentoring and block scheduling. Early successes are fostered by the provision of tools such as academic advising for students enrolled in Learning Support pre-college courses, concurrent remediation, the multi-faceted tutoring program available to all students through the Academic Enhancement Center, and programs tailored to the needs of specific sub-populations of first-year students. Finally, the overall commitment to active learning and authentic experiences for all students supports ongoing success, deep learning, and preparation for post-graduate careers and study.

## INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**High-Impact Strategy (HIS) -- Optimizing Placement for First-semester classes through Block Schedules**

Goals addressed: Goal 3 – Decrease excess credits; Goal 8—Restructure instructional delivery

GGC has invested significantly in designing and using block scheduling as a strategy for addressing Goals 3 (Decrease excess credits) and 8 (Restructure instructional delivery) of the Complete College Georgia effort. Early data from the College's pilot efforts with block scheduling indicated that this strategy supports success for the GGC student population. Therefore, the College expanded its efforts in Fall 2014 and enrolled all first-time, full-time students with less than 12 hours of prior college credit in block schedules. This expansion was successful and GGC is continuing this strategy for the 2015-16 academic year.

This strategy addresses the overall goal of increasing college completion and the two specific identified goals in two meaningful ways. The first is that block schedules serve to enroll and focus entering students on optimal set of courses for first semester based on the student's academic status (Learning Support or Non-Learning Support) and intended major or meta-major (STEM or non-STEM). Second, this strategy addresses the goals by promoting strong relationships between students in that it creates a cohort of students who are enrolled in a common set of classes, which facilitates the formation of social bonds between students and of study groups. Thus, enrolling entering students into block schedules is expected to impact both first-semester academic success and first-semester retention positively. Since these factors are known to impact first-year retention and overall progression, this strategy is seen as essential to establishing a solid base from which to increase the number of students who persist in college and complete their degrees.

Summary of Activities

GGC began offering block schedules to incoming full-time first-time students on a voluntary basis in Fall 2012 with 40 course blocks available. With preliminary data showing a positive impact on academic performance and retention, the College again offered 40 course blocks to incoming students on a voluntary basis in Fall 2013. In these two semesters, students were informed of the option to select a course block at the time of registration and were given a list of available choices. Students self-selected a course block and were enrolled in those courses by the Registrar's office staff. Data from Fall 2012 again showed a strong positive impact of block enrollment.

Based on these findings, the College has expanded the pilot and enrolled all full-time first-time students with less than 12 hours of college-level credit in course blocks designed to support the student's anticipated major. Course blocks have been developed for each meta-major and specialized for possible learning support requirements. Upon acceptance, students are informed of the block scheduling process and given a limited set of appropriate blocks to use in selecting options. Registrar's Office staff then enroll students in one of their chosen blocks. Students are given their schedule when they attend new student orientation.

During the 2014-15 academic year, the specific activities related to this strategy, aside from the ongoing creation of block schedules and enrollment of students, have focused on improving communication with students about their options and the rationale behind the course assignments. A full-time position has been created and filled to allow more focus on information and communication. As a result, the College has improved the web page(s) and communication materials (emails and letters) sent to students so that they are more logical, more directive, and more informative.

Interim Measures of Progress

Basic activity and output measures are used to track progress in implementation of this strategy. As noted above, the College offered 40 course blocks in the Fall semester of 2012 and 2013 during its pilot implementation and test of this strategy. For the full implementation in Fall 2014, 122 course blocks were prepared based on 20 different possible configurations derived from meta-majors and learning support placement options, providing spaces for 2520 students in course blocks. For Fall 2015, there are 28 course configurations derived from the meta-majors and learning support placement options. This provides spaces for up to 2557 students. As of August 1st, 2207 students have been enrolled in blocks.

While we have primarily used block scheduling as a registration tool, we also recognize the value of this approach for retention and progression. Anecdotally, faculty are reporting they are seeing increased interaction among students who are in block classes. While we currently have been capturing information on students who actively select their block (versus being placed in a block by the registrar's office), we are now focusing on identifying additional data that are needed to help us better understand the impact of block registration on student retention and progression. The values of these metrics for Spring 16 will provide baseline data for assessing progress going forward.

Measures of Success

As noted earlier, the block schedules are predicted to yield improvements in academic success and retention for enrolled students. It is difficult to identify specific baseline data for this strategy in part because GGC is implementing several overlapping strategies that impact the same students. However, for Fall 2012 and Fall 2013 students, some analysis is possible because not all incoming students were enrolled in blocks. A comparison of those in blocks to those not in blocks showed that the students in blocks had both higher GPAs and higher retention rates than students not in blocks. Data for the Fall 2014 student cohort are compared to the data for the Fall 2013 cohort and shown in Table 1. While the results suggest that a portion of the pilot results were related to self-selection of students into blocks, the Fall 2014 results nevertheless show both a clear positive impact of the blocks on GPA and retention and, to some extent, a persistent impact on student success and retention.

Table 1: Block vs Non-block Academic Performance and Retention for Fall 2013 Cohort

| N: First-time, full-time freshmen | Mean Fall GPA | Mean Fall credit hours passed | First semester retention rate (N) | Spring Cumulative GPA | Spring credit hours passed | First year retention (N) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In block Fall 2013 | 744 | 2.70 | 13.23 | 91% (678) | 2.66 | 13.18 | 71.6% (533) |
| Not in block Fall 2013 | 1225 | 2.44 | 12.07 | 86.5% (1060) | 2.42 | 12.55 | 62.4% (765) |
| Fall 2014 All FT Freshmen | 2121 | 2.48 | 11.64 | 90% (1910) | 2.51 | 10.96 | 68.0% (1442) |

### Lessons Learned and Next Steps

These data clearly demonstrate that this is an impactful strategy that is contributing to our overall success in maintaining strong retention rates in a high-need, under-prepared population. Further, as we have worked to improve this strategy, we are steadily moving toward the overall goal of supporting student success by enrolling students in the best or most-appropriate schedule of classes for their academic goals and backgrounds. GGC will continue to improve communication materials and processes, enrollment processes, and the configuration of the course blocks over the next year.

GGC fully recognizes the potential inherent in block schedules for the creation of learning communities through integration or alignment of the individual courses in each block. Enhancing the block schedules through such alignment would be a highly desirable next step. Accordingly, the College has begun exploring the implications and requirements for moving in that direction.


### HIS: Advising Center

### Goal addressed:  Goal 4 -- Provide intrusive advising

GGC has pursued development and implementation of intrusive and proactive advising programs to meet Goal 4 of the Complete College Georgia effort. In its first full year of operation, the Advising Programs office served over 1000 regularly-enrolled students and 50 students in the Grizzly Renewal Opportunity Workshops (GROW) program.

This strategy addresses the overall goal by providing support and outreach to students at higher academic risk, specifically to students required to enroll in Learning Support classes through typical advising services and to students who have been placed on academic suspension through the GROW program. Success in this endeavor is predicted to result in increased academic success and retention for academically underprepared students.

As is common in commuter student populations, the primary challenges faced by this effort are relational. Persistent work by the staff is required to engage students who are already busy and who may not recognize their need for support and to build working relationships with the students early in semester. Meeting this challenge requires a significant financial investment in staffing and in appropriate and inviting physical spaces. A further challenge lies in identifying the "right" students to target for the advising programs, which is a challenge of analytics. The primary need to address this challenge is the development of predictive analytics that are appropriate to a high-need student population.

### Summary of Activities

Based on the overall academic characteristics of GGC's student population, as summarized above, GGC has established an Office of Advising Programs. The Office is staffed by a Director, Assistant Director and 4 professional advisors, with two additional advisers as of August 2015. Students who are required to enroll in Learning Support classes are assigned to one of the professional advisors for support and guidance during their first year of enrollment. During the 2014-15 academic year, the Advising Center served 2586 students with 4377 total student visits.

The Office of Advising Programs also offers programs to students who have been placed on academic suspension. The Grizzly Renewal Opportunity Workshop (GROW) program is designed to support students who have been placed on academic suspension.  The program allows students to remain enrolled despite their academic standing provided they agree to and comply with the conditions stated in the GROW Program Contract. The program engages participants in activities designed to help them improve their academic success skills, get back on track, and improve their academic standing. Students who do not elect to participate in the program in the fall/spring semester immediately following their suspension will have to sit out the following semester and will need to appeal to the Admissions Committee for readmission.  During the upcoming year, GGC plans to expand services to include a program for students on academic probation and a possible program for students returning from academic suspension.

### Interim Measures of Progress

The initial measures of progress for this initiative have focused on evidence that the Office of Advising Programs is functional and contributing to the well-being of the GGC student population by providing services and designing appropriate programming. Evidence that the Office is meeting those progress measures can be seen in the fact that the Office of Advising Programs has added two additional advisors, has increased the number of entering students served from 1071 to 2463 (those assigned to the Advising Center), and has increased the number of students served in the GROW program from 50 to 164. Further progress will be assessed based on the College's success in meeting staffing and service targets for the Office of Advising Programs. Over the next three years, the Advising Center will expand to provide services to the all of the following: Learning Support students, English for Academic Purposes students, conditional admits, committee admits, and provisional readmits. By 2017, this is expected to create a service population of approximately 3000 students and the Advising Center will be staffed with ten professional advisors.

### Measures of Success

As noted above, the efforts of this office are expected to impact both early academic success and retention in the populations of students that are served by the office. Data from the first year of operation clearly show that the advising programs are meeting these expectations. Since all Learning Support students were referred to the Office of Advising

Programs, a direct comparison of equivalent groups of student who did and did not receive advising services is not possible. However, a year-to-year comparison is feasible using data on Learning Support students from Fall 2012 as a baseline. These students had a mean GPA at the end of their first semester of 1.75, a fall-to-spring retention rate of 74%, and a fall-to-fall retention rate of 56%.

In contrast, Advising Center advisees in Fall 2013 had a mean GPA of 2.19 at the end of their first semester, a fall-to-spring retention rate of 92%, and a fall-to-fall retention rate of 59%. All of these metrics show a substantial impact of the Advising Center. Data for Fall 2014 Advising Center students show a mean GPA of 2.03, a fall-to-spring retention rate of 83%, and a fall-to-fall retention rate of 60%, which continues to exceed student performance prior to the opening of the Advising Center. Further evidence of success can be seen in the reduced gap in first-year GPA. For the Fall 2013 cohort, the mean GPA of Advising students (2.08) was 82.9% of the mean GPA for the full cohort of first-year students (2.51). This gap was reduced for the Fall 2014 cohort with the Advising Center student GPA (2.14) reaching 85.9% of the overall student GPA (2.49). Although the fall-to-fall retention of Advising Center students continues to lag behind that of the full first-year student cohort, the gap between the two groups has also been reduced. These data show progress toward the long-term goal for this initiative, which is for Advising Center students to have retention rates and GPAs that are not more than 5% below those of the full first-year cohort in any given year.

Data for the GROW program is equally encouraging. Of the 50 students in the pilot GROW program, 50% were able to continue their enrollment. Ten students achieved an end of term GPA that returned them to good academic standing and exited the program. Another 15 earned a semester GPA of 2.0 and were able to continue in the program but did not reach good academic standing. Twenty of the students who returned to good standing or were eligible to continue in the program enrolled the following semester. Data for subsequent cohorts of GROW students is equally encouraging. In fall of 2014, 58 students participated in the GROW program. Ten returned to good standing and exited the program. An additional 24 students earned a 2.0 semester GPA and were eligible to continue in the program. Thirty of those who returned to good standing or were eligible to continue in the program enrolled the following semester. Eighty-six students participated in the program during spring 2015. 18 successfully exited the program and 32 were eligible to continue in the program.

### Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The data indicate the success of the GROW program for engaging and facilitating increased levels of success among GGC's most at-risk students. Next steps involved increasing levels of support for GROW and related efforts that support this group of students and other groups of at-risk students at the College. Efforts in this direction (e.g., hiring of additional advisors) are already underway. Advising Center staff had a total of 4440 meetings with students in the past (2014-15) academic year, and this number is projected to grow in the year ahead in support of our first-year students and other student success (learning support) populations.

### HIS: Concurrent Remediation

### Goals addressed: Goal 7 -- Transforming remediation; Goal 8 – Restructure instructional delivery

GGC has also invested heavily in supporting Goal 7 (Transforming remediation) by developing and deploying a strong program of concurrent remediation. During the 2014-15 academic year GGC offered concurrent remediation to eligible students in mathematics, reading, and English.

This strategy addresses the overall goal of increasing college completions supporting the needs of academically underprepared students while enabling them to earn graduation-eligible credits during their first semester of enrollment. Effective, well-designed concurrent remediation options are expected to lead to increased academic success and confidence and increased retention in academically underprepared students.

The primary challenge for GGC in implementation of this strategy continues to be one of capacity building. While our data show that the concurrent remediation effort is successful and there is a clear need to grow the programs to serve more students, there are significant costs associated with hiring and preparing sufficient faculty to maintain implementation fidelity as this effort scales up. A second significant challenge is to match remediation approaches to students based on careful analyses of historical success patterns.

### Summary of Activities

GGC has continued to invest heavily in developing and offering remediation through a concurrent delivery model to qualified students. Developed by faculty, the model is based on successful models such as the Accelerated Learning Program used by Baltimore Community College. The College has successfully implemented programs for English (Segue English) and mathematics (ACCESS Math), pairing corequisite remedial support and instruction with the appropriate college-level class. Further, during the 2014-15 academic year, GGC offered courses pairing remedial support in reading with ENGL 1101, thus making concurrent remediation available to an expanded population of students. While recent changes in USG policy regarding remediation combine foundation-level reading remediation with English, the investment in planning and curriculum development has proven useful in improving the framework for future concurrent remediation in English.

### Interim Measures of Progress

Progress for this initiative is measured by tracking the number of sections offered, which provides a measure of the number of students served. GGC has increased its investment in concurrent remediation each year, moving from 12 sections of Segue English and 8 of ACCESS Math in 2012-13 to 17 sections of Segue English and 18 sections of ACCESS Math in 2014-15. Further, during the 2014-15 academic year, GGC prepared to increase the scope of this initiative in compliance with new policies of the University System of Georgia. For Fall 2015, the College will have 23 sections of Segue English, serving over 360 students. For learning support Math, the College will offer 25 sections of concurrent remediation aligned with MATH 1001 (for non-STEM track students) and 32 sections aligned with MATH 1111 (for STEM track or Undecided students). Table 2 tracks the growth of corequisite course offering and projects likely targets

for the 2016-17 academic year.

Table 2: Implementation of Corequisite Remediation

| Corequisite Remediation Course | FA 2014 # sections | FA 2014 enrollment | New Corequisite Remediation Course | Projected # sections FA15 | Projected enrollment FA15 | Projected # sections FA16 at 67% in corequisite course |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ENGL 0099 | 9 | 144 | ENGL 0999 | 23 | 360 | 29 |
| (Segue English) | | | Total corequisite ENGL | 23 | 360 | 29 |
| | | | | | | |
| MATH 0111 | 11 | 189 | MATH 0997 | 25 | 500 | 31 |
| (Access Algebra) | | | MATH 0999 | 32 | 640 | 36 |
| | | | Total concurrent MATH | 57 | 1140 | 67 |

A second measure of progress is the number of faculty in each discipline prepared to teach the courses. This number has increased over time as additional faculty are trained or hired with the appropriate skills and background to teach and engage with students in corequisite courses effectively. An example of this effort is the specific training provided by faculty leaders in the English discipline for colleagues teaching the ENGL 0099 Segue courses. In the Math discipline, the effort is bolstered by the purposeful hiring of those with appropriate teaching experience and skills that will serve well in or be adaptable to the corequisite classroom.

**Measures of Success**

The critical measure of success for this initiative is the overall success of the students, both immediately in the Learning Support and college-level courses and in subsequent related classes. Baseline data for success in learning support classes is show in Table 6 below, with the data for AY13 serving as the overall baseline. The results from the early implementation showed that students in the Segue English and ACCESS Math classes were able to exit Learning Support at higher rates than their peers in traditional Learning Support and passed ENGL 1101 and MATH 1111 at comparable rates to their non-Learning Support peers. Subsequent years have produced comparable results. For the 2014-15 academic year, the data continued to show that students in the Segue and ACCESS classes perform well. Figures 1 and 2 show that students in the concurrent remediation classes successfully completed ENGL 1101 and MATH 1111 at rates comparable to their peers who did not require remediation and substantially higher than their peers who completed a traditional sequence of remediation followed by the credit-bearing class. In the 2014-15 academic year, about 77% of students exited ENGL 1101 after having completed a traditional (non-concurrent, or foundational) remedial English class, whereas about 83% of students who enrolled in ENGL 1101 while in a concurrent co-requisite remedial ENGL 0099 section exited successfully. For MATH 1111, about 73% of students enrolled in concurrent co-requisite remediation successfully exited the Gateway course. These same data document high success rates in the learning support courses as successful completion of the credit-bearing class documents successful exit of the learning support requirement. As GGC increases enrollment in concurrent remediation, the target for success metrics is to maintain performance of students in concurrent remediation at the same level as performance of non-remedial students.

**Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

As learning support continues to change throughout the University System of Georgia, GGC anticipates our programs will continue to grow and evolve in order to effectively meet the needs of our unique student population. The move toward increased numbers of corequisite learning support offerings and more tailored options for STEM and non-STEM track students with respect to remedial mathematics should continue to enhance the opportunity for success among GGC's less prepared first-year students. In the year ahead, careful measurement of student success rates will be taken.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Passing Math Gateway Course by Remediation Status
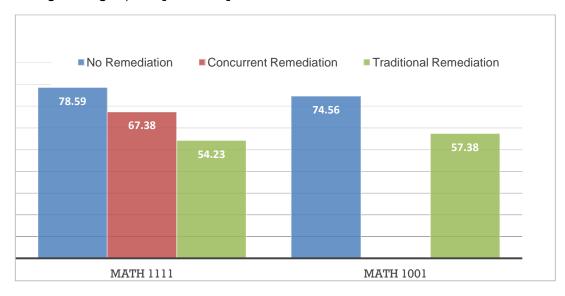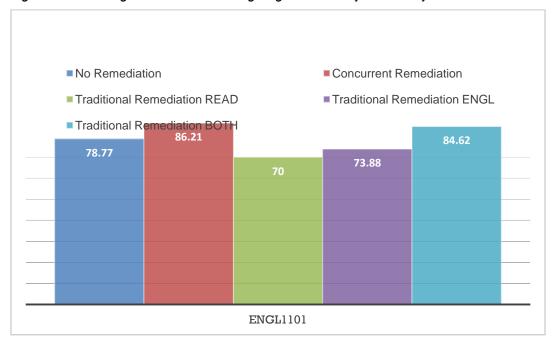
Figure 2: Percentage of Students Passing English Gateway Course by Remediation Status



HIS: Expansive and Available Tutorial Support Services

**Goals addressed: Goal 8 – Restructure instructional delivery; Goal 9 Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities**

Recognizing that, for some students, the structure and format of their class section may not be sufficient for mastery of the course material, GGC has invested deeply in tutorial services. Extra-curricular tutoring provides a safety net for students who are academically underprepared, who struggle with self-organization and management, or who find their instructor's pedagogical approach incompatible with their own learning style.

Deep investment in tutoring services addresses Goal 8 (Restructure instructional delivery) by offering to students instructional contexts that vary from those found in the classroom and that may better fit the student's individual needs. Given that much of GGC's population enters college at an increased level of risk due to poor academic preparation, first generation status, racial/ethnic minority status, or a combination of factors, the College's investment in tutoring also serves Goal 9 (Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities) as one of an array of support services designed to enable students to succeed in their educational efforts.

**Summary of Activities**

GGC's investment in tutoring services has been a feature of the college since its opening. As of the most recent academic year, tutoring services are offered in two face-to-face on-campus locations, in classrooms, online, and at a variety of other campus locations, including the campus Residence Halls. The on-campus tutoring centers are open 63 hours per week and offer support for all classes and disciplines, with limited exceptions, which are typically covered in online or specialized tutoring sessions. The tutoring center, known as the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) employs 32 professional tutors and 15 student/peer tutors. In addition, more than 20 faculty volunteers and a small number of community volunteers have donated time to the center each academic year.

In addition, GGC offers tutoring outside of the AEC through its TIC-TAC-TOE programs. The TIC program provides Tutors In the Classroom for selected courses, including ENGL 0099, MATH 0099, ENGL 1101, ENGL 1102, MATH 1001, MATH 1111, ITEC 2140, ITEC 2150, and some EAP (English for Academic Purposes/English as a second language) courses. During the most recent year, the TIC program supported 14 tutors (4 primary) in 46 class sections to serve over 700 students. The TAC program provides Tutors Around Campus, professional tutors who provide drop-in tutoring in a variety of well-populated locations on campus such as the food courts, the residence halls, and the student center. 9 TAC tutors provided 460 hours of tutoring services in the most recent academic year. TOE provides Tutoring Online Everywhere through a relationship with Smarthinking (a Pearson service), which provides access any time of the day or night to online tutoring for GGC students. In the 2014-15 academic year, 428 students accessed the TOE Smarthinking service for a total of about 2,200 online tutoring sessions.

### Interim Measures of Progress

Increased use of tutoring services in the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) serves as a strong indicator of progress in the area of expansive and available tutorial support services. During the 2013-14 academic year, there were 15,357 tutoring sessions provided to 3,876 students in the AEC. During the 2014-15 academic year, there were 18,123 sessions provided to 4,623 students in the AEC. This is an 18% increase in the total number of sessions from the 2013-14 academic year.

### Measures of Success

Increased Grade Point Averages (GPA) is a valuable measure of success for the implementation of expansive and available tutorial support services at GGC. It is not possible to provide a baseline figure for this strategy as GGC has always invested heavily in making tutoring available and accessible to all students. Further, since students often access multiple forms of available tutoring support, it is not feasible to conduct a fine-grained comparison across the various options. Rather, assessment of this strategy rests in maintaining a positive impact of tutoring services as shown in the comparison of GPA between those who utilize the services and the overall student population. In Fall 2014, the average overall GPA of students who visited the AEC was 2.84 (compare to 2.71 among all GGC students). Further, in Spring 2015, the average GPA of students who visited the AEC was 2.86 (compare to 2.76 among all GGC students).

### Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) will continue to support all the efforts toward expansive and available tutorial support services, using innovative methods and technology to provide an effective and engaging tutorial experience. The AEC exists to help students become more confident, efficient, and successful learners. AEC tutors (both professional and peer tutors) and volunteer faculty continue to work to establish friendly, welcoming interaction with students while challenging and equipping them to excel in their coursework and ultimately in their careers.


## HIS: Active Pedagogy with Authentic Experiences

### Goal addressed: Goal 8 -- Restructure instructional delivery

GGC's primary strategy to address Goal 8 (Restructure instructional delivery) is focused on creating classroom experiences for students that are engaging, provide authentic experiences, and promote deep learning and transferrable skills. The three flagship efforts at GGC are the Undergraduate Research Experience initiative across all STEM programs, the programmatic structure of the Education programs, and the programmatic structure of the new Nursing program.

These efforts address the overall goal by connecting classroom instruction to future study and careers and by promoting active and deep learning. They further address Georgia's completion goals by promoting strong relationships between students, between faculty and students, and between students and potential future employers. These factors are known to contribute to student persistence and success and are expected to result in stronger than predicted academic performance, retention, progression, and graduation.

The primary challenges in implementing this strategy across the institution rest in curriculum development, faculty development, and faculty-student ratios. Instruction based in active learning and authentic experience requires a skilled teacher and a well-designed curriculum. GGC's faculty have dedicated extensive time to professional development to acquire the skills in curriculum design and teaching that are needed and maintaining the College's commitment to faculty professional development is essential. Another primary need for the success of this strategy is a network of relationships with local companies, schools, and medical facilities so that ample opportunities are available for student internships, placements, and other experiences.

### Summary of Activities

A primary focus of GGC's efforts in restructuring instructional delivery has been the development and delivery of active, engaging courses that include authentic discipline-based experiences. The primary efforts on this initiative have been housed in the STEM disciplines and in teacher education. The new nursing program has also crafted a curriculum that invests heavily in active learning and authentic experiences in the field.

The STEM disciplines have been working collaboratively over several years to redesign classes and laboratory exercises to involve students in authentic research every semester of undergraduate enrollment beginning with the laboratory component of class in the first STEM course and building toward an independent or directed research project prior to graduation, known on campus as the Four-year Undergraduate Research Experience (URE). These experiences

range from individual lab exercises to study-abroad data collection and analysis opportunities. In addition, a service learning course that engages GGC STEM students with local K-12 teachers and classrooms is now offered every semester along with academic internships.

GGC's Teacher Education programs have also been carefully designed to provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic classroom-based activity every semester. Pre-education majors are provided an opportunity to work in after-school tutoring programs, which expose them to children at various levels of development and academic attainment. Majors are placed in field settings each semester with the level of responsibility and complexity of expectations set at a developmentally appropriate level each term. This immersive experience coupled with a curriculum designed to support meaning-making to apply lessons learned from classroom experiences provides GGC students with a rich and engaging program and prepares them well for their future roles as classroom teachers.

GGC's new Nursing program has adopted a similar design and places students in clinical settings beginning in their first semester in the major. In addition, the Nursing program used a flipped classroom design for all their courses and makes extensive use of state-of-the-art simulation classrooms to engage students in additional experiential learning.

Further, the faculty within the Schools of Business and Liberal Arts engage in continual professional development in course design and pedagogy to create engaging courses and promote deep learning and development in their students. The Liberal Arts majors, like their STEM counterparts, encourage students to participate in internship programs through their curriculum. These real-world experiences provide liberal arts and business students with clearer connections between their academic work and their career options while also aiding students in making connections with potential employers. Within the Business curriculum, selected classes engage students with genuine or simulated businesses and require students to complete projects such as marketing plans, business plans, and simulated management exercises.

Interim Measures of Progress

Progress for this initiative is measured by tracking the extent to which the curriculum efforts impact students and involve them in active and authentic learning experiences. The joint STEM URE effort at GGC has been firmly established as part of the institution's programs. Across all disciplines, this program now involves 27 separate courses and 273 class sections and, in the most recent academic year, directly impacted 3435 individual (unduplicated) students.

Similarly, progress in the Teacher Education programs is measured by monitoring the success of the program in placing its students in appropriate settings. During the Academic Year 2013-14, 231 pre-education majors were placed in afterschool settings. In addition, the program placed 566 students in over 90 Gwinnett County public schools for field experiences and student teaching. Tables 3a and 3b show the breakdown of student placements for the academic year.

| Table 3a: GGC Teacher Education students by Type of Experience | Total Students |
|---|---|
| Field Experience I | 144 |
| Field Experience II | 155 |
| Field Experience III | 150 |
| Student Teaching | 129 |
| Grand Total | 578 |

| Table 3b:GCPS school level placements utilized for GGC Students | Total Schools |
|---|---|
| Elementary | 58 |
| High School | 15 |
| Middle School | 15 |
| Grand Total | 88 |

The Nursing program was also successful in placing students in appropriate clinical settings with all 31 of the first cohort placed during Fall 2014 and a total of 56 placed in Spring 2015 of whom 29 were continuing students and 27 were members of the second student cohort.

The data for STEM and Liberal Arts students seeking internships is also encouraging, although growth is certainly still possible for these majors. Table 4 shows the number of students enrolled in internship classes in each discipline between Summer 2014 and Spring 2015.

Table 4: Internship Participation by Liberal Arts and STEM Majors

| Liberal Arts | Summer 2014 | Fall 2014 | Spring 2015 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 7 | 12 | 14 | 33 |
| Criminal Justice | 8 | 8 | 6 | 22 |
| History | | 8 | 20 | 28 |
| Political Science | | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Psychology | | 9 | 6 | 15 |
| Liberal Arts Subtotal | | | | 103 |
| STEM | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Biology | 7 | 3 | 4 | 14 |
| Exercise Science | 8 | 7 | 16 | 31 |
| Information Technology | 6 | 6 | 7 | 19 |
| STEM Subtotal | | | | 64 |
| Overall Total | | | | 167 |

**Measures of Success**

The critical measures of success for this initiative, aside from the broad College-wide measures of retention and progression, are measures that reflect the effectiveness of engagement and deep learning on student behavior and measures that reflect post-graduation success. Within the STEM majors, GGC has seen steady growth in the number of students engaged in undergraduate research, with 82 students enrolled in the senior research class during the past academic year, 8 students in the inaugural sophomore-level research class and over 40 students presenting at regional or national conferences.

Similarly, the Teacher Education programs have seen students successfully complete the program prepared for the demands of their careers can be seen in the fact that approximately 10% of the new teachers hired by the Gwinnett County Public Schools for 2014-15 are GGC graduates.

A broader measure of success for this metric, as for others, is the overall success of GGC students in their academic careers and the degree to which students report being deeply engaged in their courses and with their faculty. Tables 6 and 7 below show the College's baseline data for AY13 and the related figures for each year since. As can be seen, GGC is achieving strong retention and graduation rates relative to peer institutions and expects to see these rates continue to improve. Further, data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicates that GGC students report educational experiences that are challenging and engaging. GGC participates regularly in NSSE and, thus, can provide 2013 results as a baseline. In the 2013 administration, GGC seniors placed GGC in the top 10% on two of ten engagement indicators and in the top 50% on an additional three. As Table 5 shows, for the 2015 administration, GGC seniors place GGC in the top 10% of institutions nationally on five of ten Engagement Indicators and in the top 50% of institutions nationally on an additional two. These results, while indirect, provide strong evidence that GGC's commitment to active pedagogy is creating an engaging, challenging, and supporting environment for students. GGC's long term goals for retention and progression are shown in Table 6. The College's overall goal for NSSE indicators is to maintain its strong results.

### Table 5: NSSE Engagement Indicators for GGC Seniors

| | GGC | Carnegie Class | NSSE 2014 & 2015 | Top 50% | Top 10% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Academic Challenge** | | | | | |
| Higher-Order Learning | 43.9 | 41.5 | 41.4 | 43.5 | 45.3 |
| Reflective and Integrative Learning | 39.7 | 39.3 | 39.0 | 41.3 | 43.1 |
| Learning Strategies | 42.7 | 40.6 | 40.3 | 42.5 | 44.8 |
| Quantitative Reasoning | 33.3 | 29.7 | 30.4 | 31.8 | 33.6 |
| **Learning with Peers** | | | | | |
| Collaborative Learning | 34.4 | 32.4 | 32.9 | 35.7 | 38.2 |
| Discussions with Diverse Others | 46.7 | 39.7 | 42.0 | 43.9 | 45.9 |
| **Experiences with Faculty** | | | | | |
| Student-Faculty Interaction | 25.0 | 24.8 | 24.0 | 29.8 | 34.1 |
| Effective Teaching Practices | 43.7 | 41.4 | 40.8 | 43.1 | 45.1 |
| **Campus Environment** | | | | | |
| Quality of Interactions | 44.2 | 43.5 | 42.4 | 45.0 | 46.7 |
| Supportive Environment | 37.8 | 33.7 | 33.3 | 36.1 | 38.8 |

For information on the impact of this approach on individuals, see the most recent edition of GGC's *Engage* magazine (http://summer2015.engage.ggc.edu/).

**Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

The data related to these specific efforts continue to be highly encouraging. GGC is succeeding in engaging,

retaining, and graduating a high-risk, high-need population of students. Both the quantitative data reported here and the anecdotal data available indicate that the GGC educational experience, which is highly relational, active, and authentic, is providing the environment and context necessary to support student success and development. Going forward, the College will maintain its commitment to strong pedagogy both through its hiring processes and through its investment in professional development for faculty to enable them to design and deliver GGC's highly effective Integrated Educational Experience.

### Other Strategies

GGC is continuing to pursue the additional strategies that were discussed in our 2012 plan and 2013 report including its intentional outreach to and collaboration with the Gwinnett County Schools. The An example of the depth and quality of the relationship between GGC and the Gwinnett County Schools is their upcoming joint presentation to the upcoming conference for Georgia Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) and their P-12 Partners titled "Transforming Educator Preparation: Building Capacity to Positively Impact P-12 Student Learning. College is also pursuing expanded new student orientation with differentiated sessions for specific sub-populations, clear and consistent information about degree requirements, dedicated faculty mentoring, and hybrid course schedules. Further, the College is continuing to emphasize faculty mentoring and student engagement as a universal expectation for all faculty.

Other "high-engagement" strategies are in use by individual disciplines and programs. While not "official" initiatives of GGC's Completion Plan, these efforts are consistent with the general theme of GGC's overall effort. These initiatives include peer tutors and other outreach and support activities in Information Technology, service learning and experiential capstone classes in the School of Liberal Arts and School of Business. As with the STEM programs, the disciplines in Liberal Arts have aggressively pursued involvement of students in research and saw 8 students present at regional and national conferences in the last academic year. Of particular note is the inauguration of a Summer Bridge program for a small sample of entering students in the Fall 2015 cohort. Based on the results for the pilot cohort, GGC will determine a level of effort for this initiative for future years.

In addition, the College is continuing to invest in developing a predictive analytic model of students at unusually high risk within our high-risk population that will inform efforts to direct specific students to the programs and opportunities most likely to support that individual student's success. Future plans include expanding the block scheduling to Spring semester admits, continuing to expand the number of students enrolled in concurrent remedial courses and participating in the Undergraduate Research Experience, and exploration of the value of awarding associate degrees to students who complete all the requisite coursework.

## OBSERVATIONS

Data on the core metrics GGC has elected to track are encouraging for this reporting year as shown in Table 6 below. The College met its targets for most metrics in Academic Year 2014-15. Notably, since hitting a low of 61.5% for the Fall 2100 cohort, first-year retention has improved steadily, indicating that the joint efforts in orientation, advising, and transforming remediation are having an impact on student success and persistence. Since early success, which is known to predict progress and persistence, is a primary focus of several of GGC's efforts in the Completion Plan, GGC will continue to monitor this closely. Early data on graduation numbers are also encouraging, as can be seen in Table 7. While the proportional graduation rate has declined slightly, which would be consistent with earlier lower retention rates, the number of students graduating in each cohort has continued to climb, reflecting GGC's rapid growth rate.

The data on first generation and Pell Grant eligible students continue to show that GGC is maintaining its strong focus on providing access to underserved student populations. The continuing improvements in first semester exit rates for Learning Support students, and particularly the rates for students in the concurrent remediation classes (Segue English and ACCESS Math), provide evidence that GGC's efforts to strengthen and transform remediation are having the intended effects. As GGC implements the proposed new models for remediation, we expect to see differential exit rates in foundations-level and co-requisite Learning Support courses. Table 6 shows projected exit rates for each course level.

The common theme across the five high-impact strategies discussed here, along with other efforts that have shown an impact at GGC is that they are all high engagement, individual focused efforts, which is perhaps not surprising given the high-need population that GGC serves. In addition to the five specific strategies discussed in this report, differentiated orientation, faculty mentoring, and relationship-building with the Gwinnett County Public Schools continue to show a strong impact on enrollment, success, and retention.

Table 6: College-wide metrics for Georgia Gwinnett College

| Metric | AY 13 Actual | AY 14 Target* | AY14 Actual | AY15 Target | AY15 Actual | AY16 Target | AY17 Target | AY18 Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| One year retention (at GGC) | 61.7% F 2011 cohort | 73% | 63.2% F 2012 cohort | 64% | 68.0 F 2013 cohort | 65% | 66% | 67% |
| Degrees conferred | 272 | 290 (Sp14) | 305 | 375 (Sp15) | 413 | 400 (Sp16) | 425 (Sp17) | 450 (Sp18) |
| Six-year graduation rate | 26.8% | | 26.6 F | 29% | 20.9% | 30% (2010 | 31% | 32% |

| (within institution) | 2007 cohort | | 2008 cohort | 2009 cohort | | cohort) | | (2011 cohort) | (2012 cohort) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % First Generation students enrolled (neither parent earned postsecondary credential) | 31.9% | 44% | 31.1 | 44% | 31.1 | 44% | | 44% | 44% |
| % Pell Grant eligible students enrolled | 55.5% | 50% | 56.9 | 50% | 57.3 | 50% | | 50% | 50% |
| First semester exit rate: Learning Support English | 67.5% | 77% | 73.3 | 79% | 75.5% | Foundations | 78% | 79% | 80% |
| | | | | | | Co-requisite | 81% | 82% | 83% |
| First semester exit rate: Learning Support Math | 45.1% | 44% | 49.5 | 60% | 51.8% | Foundations | 61% | 62% | 63% |
| | | | | | | Co-requisite | 71% | 72% | 73% |
| First semester exit rate: Learning Support Reading | 70.1% | 75% | 76.3 | 80% | 73.8% | Course to be phased out due to USG policy changes | | | |
| First attempt completion rate: College Algebra | 63.7% | 67% | 64.5 | 70% | 66.4% | 71 | | 72 | 72 |
| First attempt completion rate: Intro to Computing | 77.1% | 77% | 78.6 | 82% | 77.9% | 82 | | 83 | 83 |
| First attempt completion rate: English Composition | 74.3% | | 74% | | 72.7% | 75 | | 76 | 76 |

Table 7: Official graduation rates for GGC students (IPEDs FTFTF cohorts)

| | | 4 Year | | | | 5 Year | | | | 6 Year | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Institution* | | *System* | | *Institution* | | *System* | | *Institution* | | *System* | |
| Cohort Year | # FTFTF Cohort | N | Rate | N | Rate | N | Rate | N | Rate | N | Rate | N | Rate |
| Fall 2007 | 295 | 16 | 5.4% | 27 | 8.1% | 54 | 18.3% | 84 | 25.1% | 79 | 26.8% | 111 | 37.4% |
| Fall 2008 | 361 | 21 | 5.8% | 37 | 8.0% | 65 | 18.0% | 77 | 25.93% | 96 | 26.6% | 137 | 38.0% |
| Fall 2009 | 708 | 28 | 4.0% | 46 | 6.5% | 92 | 13.0% | 144 | 20.3% | 148 | 20.9% | | |
| Fall 2010 | 1615 | 57 | 3.5% | 98 | 6.1% | 184 | 11.4% | | | | | | |
| Fall 2011 | 1996 | 41 | 2.6% | | | | | | | | | | |

Efforts that are focused on wide-scale communication and technology have shown less impact and less penetration into the mind-set and practice of the institution. Two primary factors have contributed to the challenges in implementing strategies based on technology tools and communication. The first is the necessity of prioritizing initiatives in the context of budgetary limitations presented by the current economic climate. Faced with choices between funding direct student intervention efforts and funding other initiatives, GGC has consistently chosen to prioritize the former, to good effect. Thus, investment in early alert technology and implementation of some capabilities of DegreeWorks have been delayed. GGC expects to increase efforts on these initiatives as its funding improves.

The second factor impacting implementation of communication and technology initiatives arises from the limitations presented by GGC's hosted software environment for Banner. The hosted environment introduces complexities in implementing some initiatives that rely on communication across software systems and platforms, including those owned by Ellucian that are designed to integrate with Banner. Thus, implementing these solutions requires extensive human resource investment in consultation with ITS and Ellucian to create locally-developed solutions and increases the likelihood of errors, so additional time working toward implementation is necessary.

GGC's overall Completion Plan is a living and responsive effort continually enhanced by new activities and

initiatives that emerge from the committed work of the campus community. These activities and initiatives include workshops for middle and high school teachers that strengthen the relationship between the Gwinnett County schools and GGC, development of a resource handbook for faculty to provide information on concurrent remediation, along with block schedules and other scheduling options.